

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EURE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 OMB-01 NIC-01 GAC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09

H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5293

INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB UNN

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PFOR YO

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PROTESTS FOREIGN OFFICE STATEMENT ON
CAMP COUNSELOR INCIDENT AND FRONT ATTACK ON VOA

REF: BELGRADE 1247 BELGRADE 1235 (REF A)

1. SUMMARY. AMBASSADOR CALLED MARCH 26 ON ASST FED SEC.
FON. AFFAIRS (ACTING DEPUTY FED. SEC.) TOPALOSKI TO PROTEST
DISTORTED AND CONTINUED PUBLICITY OVER CAMP COUNSELOR INCIDENT,
LACK OF PUBLIC RETRACTION VOA CHARGES, AND FSFA MARCH 22 PRESS
CONFERENCE STATEMENT ON THESE AND OTHER MATTERS. TOPALOSKI
RESPONDED ALONG LINES OF OFFICE DIRECTOR KREACIC TO DCM (REFTEL A)
BUT CLAIMED THAT PRESS CONF. STATEMENT INCORRECTLY HANDLED BY
TANJUG AND WESTER PRESS AND THAT FONOFF PLANNED STATEMENT TO
END ON UP- BEAT NOTE WITH DESCRIPTION US PRO MEMORIA IN FAVOR-
ABLE TERMS. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR EXPRESS PARTICULAR DISAPPOINTMENT OVER
FSFA PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT WHICH LINKED CAMP COUNSELOR
INCIDENT WITH HOSTILE EFFORTS OF USTASA AND OTHER EXTREMIST
ELEMENTS. THIS, ADDED TO EXCESSIVE PUBLICITY ALREADY
GIVEN CAMP COUNSELOR INTERVIEWS COULD ONLY ADD FURTHER STRAIN
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TO OUR RELATIONS, HE SAID.

3. CONCERNING VOA, AMBASSADOR SAID HE HOPED TOPALOSKI WOULD USE GOOD OFFICES TO SEE THAT FRONT PUBLISHED EITHER PUBLIC RE-TRACTION OF VOA CHARGE OR, AT LEAST, EMBASSY LETTER TO FRONT EDITOR SENT ON MARCH 23.

4. TOPALOSKI DISCUSSED CAMP COUNSELOR INCIDENT IN MANNER SIMILAR TO THAT USED BY KREACIC TO DCM, CITING " SENSITIVITY" OF PRESENT POLITICAL MOMENT IN YUGOSLAVIA.

5. TOPALOSKI EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT AMBASSADOR'S REACTION TO FSFA PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT. HE PRODUCED OFFICIAL SERBO-CROATIAN TRANSCRIPT SHOWING SEPARATION BETWEEN USTASA AND CAMP COUNSELOR COMMENT. AMBASSADOR CITED TANJUG VERSION WHICH SHOWED NO SUCH SEPARATION AND ADDED THAT IMPLICIT LINK WAS MADE DUE TO PROXIMITY OF STATEMENTS REGARDLESS OF EXACT LANGUAGE.

6. TOPALOSKI POINTED OUT THREE ELEMENTS OF STATEMENT: USE OF LOCAL U. S. STATIONS FOR ATTACKS ON YUGOSLAVIA, CAMP COUNSELOR STATEMENT, AND REFERENCE TO U. S. PRO MEMORIA. FIRST TWO, HE SAID, WERE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED IN ADVANCE. FONOFF FELT IT COULD NOT DUCK ISSUE AND FORTHRIGHT ANSWERS WERE APPROVED AT HIGH LEVEL IN FONOFF. THERE WAS NO ATTEMPT OR INTENTION ON PART OF FONOFF TO LINK CAMP COUNSELOR INTERVIEWS WITH USTASA ACTIVITIES.

7. THIRD ELEMENT WAS REFERENCE TO U. S. PRO MEMORIA. THIS WAS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO END STATEMENT ON POSITIVE NOTE WITH REGARD U. S. - YUGOSLAV RELATIONS. TOPALOSKI ADDED IN CONFIDENCE THAT STATEMENT ON PRO MEMORIA WAS IN FACT MORE POSITIVE THAN ACTUAL FONOFF VIEW WHICH WAS STILL BEING DRAFTED FOR OFFICIAL RESPONSE. BUT, SAID TOPALOSKI, THIS THIRD ELEMENT WITH POSITIVE OVERTONES WAS COMPLETELY IGNORED BY WESTERN PRESS COVERAGE.

8. TOPALOSKI SAID HE HOPED PUBLICITY OVER CAMP COUNSELOR INTERVIEWS HAD RUN ITS COURSE AND THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD DO BEST TO AVOID FURTHER EXPLOITATION OF UNPLEASANT EPISODE. AMBASSADOR SHARED SUCH HOPE AND URGED THAT FUTURE COMPLAINTS BE HANDLED IN QUIET MANNER BETWEEN FONOFF AND EMBASSY TO AVOID " EXCESSIVE EXACERBATION" OF BI- LATERAL RELATIONS.

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9. TOPALOSKI SAID FONOFF HAS ALREADY TOLD FRONT THAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO CORRECT RECORD ON VOA CHARGE. HE ADMITTED THAT CORRECTION MIGHT CONSIST OF STATEMENT EXONERATING VOA BUT ATTACKING U. S. DOMESTIC STATIONS WHICH ATTACK YUGOSLAVIA AND CALL FOR VIOLENCE AND SUBVERSION. HE AGREED USE HIS " MINIMAL" INFLUENCE TO HAVE FRONT PUBLISH EMBASSY LETTER.

10. AMBASSADOR SAID FRONT PUBLICATION OF ONLY EXCERPTS FROM EMBASSY LETTER WOULD BE LESS THAN SATISFACTORY. HE HOPED TOPALOSKI WOULD BE ABLE PERSUADE FRONT MAKE FULL RETRACTION WITHOUT LINKING IT WITH CHARGES AGAINST U. S. DOMESTIC STATIONS.
TOON

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Disposition Authority: morefirh
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